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(54) Title: IMPROVED INTEGRATED PICK TICKET AND METHOD OF FULFILLMENT AND SHIPPING

(57) Abstract: An integrated pick ticket is employed to provide all information from a customer that is necessary to fill their order and includes a top portion separable from the bottom portion and which may be used as a gift card. The bottom half of the ticket includes locations for entry of information as to the sender and as to the gift recipient. Additional spaces are provided to allow placement of information concerning the date of the order, the requested method of shipping, and, carrier, if appropriate, and a pick list comprising a listing of the items ordered including their product identification numbers, and quantity, and, perhaps information concerning their location within the associated warehouse. In one embodiment, a bar code label is provided on the ticket having adhesive backing and a release paper covering the adhesive backing on one side of the ticket. The bar code label is coded with order number information from which information may be retrieved concerning the name and address of the recipient as well as the shipping instructions from the customer. In the method, the bar code label is affixed to the outside of the box and a shipping label is generated from information on the bar code label and shipping department personnel adhere the shipping label on the box. An alternative ticket has a shipping label already printed thereon.

**IMPROVED INTEGRATED PICK TICKET AND METHOD
OF FULFILLMENT AND SHIPPING**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an improved integrated pick ticket and method of fulfillment and shipping. Of late, gift sale and delivery companies comprise a burgeoning industry. With the advent of global computerized communications networks such as that which is well known as the "INTERNET", the ability to communicate with prospective customers has been on the upswing. Orders from customers must be filled by a fulfillment department retrieving products from inventory, packaging them, and forwarding them to a shipping department where they are shipped. Errors including sending the wrong gift to the recipient or sending the correct gift but a card meant for another person create severe problems for any gift sale and delivery business. Errors and inefficiencies in the fulfillment and shipping departments go a long way toward creating customer service problems and draining profits from a mail order gift delivery operation. As such, a need has developed for an integrated pick ticket and method of fulfillment and shipping which enhance the efficiency of the operation and reduce errors to the point where the fulfillment and shipping departments contribute to the profitability of the business rather than detracting from it. A need has also developed for an integrated pick ticket that may be used in a situation where orders are taken at one location and are

fulfilled and shipped from a remote location simply and with minimal chance for error. It is with these needs in mind that the present invention was developed.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an improved integrated pick ticket and method of fulfillment and shipping. The present invention includes the following interrelated objects, aspects and features:

(1) In a first aspect, the present invention contemplates an integrated pick ticket which may be employed to provide all information from a customer that is necessary to fill their personalized order. In a first embodiment, the ticket includes a top portion separable from the bottom portion and which comprises a personalized gift card. If desired, the gift card may include a horizontal or vertical perforation allowing it to be folded about that perforation to close it.

(2) The bottom half of the ticket includes locations for printing of information as to the sender and as to the gift recipient. Additional spaces are provided to allow printing of information concerning the date of the order, the requested method of shipping, and, carrier, if appropriate, and a pick list comprising listing of the descriptions of items ordered including their product identification numbers, the quantity, and, perhaps,

information concerning their location within the associated warehouse.

(3) In the preferred embodiment, a bar code label is provided on the bottom half of the ticket which has adhesive backing and a release paper covering the adhesive backing on one side of the ticket. The bar code label is coded with order number information enabling an interface with a shipping manifest system that produces a common carrier shipping label.

(4) In an alternative embodiment, instead of the bar code label, the bottom of the bottom half of the ticket may include a complete shipping label with the name, address and telephone number of the recipient as well as all of the information that would be printed on the label by a common carrier such as, for example, Federal Express or United Parcel Service. The printed label might include a bar code or other machine readable language as well as human readable printing including the common carrier specific information including common carrier tracking number and any other information that would be included in machine or human readable language on a shipping label required to manifest and deliver the package.

(5) In practicing the inventive method of fulfillment and shipping, the integrated pick ticket is employed by the fulfillment department personnel to assemble the gift and place it within a gift container such as a decorated box. The gift card is separated

from the ticket and inserted into the box. In the first embodiment, the bar code label is affixed to the outside of the box.

(6) With the bar code label affixed to the shipping container, the shipping container is delivered to an area where a bar code reader reads the order number from the label and provides the information read to a shipping manifest system which receives the information, relates it to information contained in the file related to the order number, and creates a common carrier label as well as whatever additional labeling or information is necessary so that the container is manifested using the common carrier either as requested by the customer or as chosen by the shipping department. The shipping label is adhered to the container and the container is forwarded to the common carrier. If desired, the shipping label may be adhered over the bar code label so that the bar code information is obscured such that the common carrier's bar code readers are not able to read the bar code information from the bar code label, thereby avoiding any possibility of confusion during shipping.

(7) In the second embodiment, the preprinted shipping label still affixed to the integrated pick ticket is peeled off the ticket by either the shipping or fulfillment department and affixed to the container, whereupon it is forwarded to the common carrier.

(8) Concerning either embodiment of the present invention, either embodiment may be employed in one of two situations, (1) where the fulfillment and shipping department is in the same physical location as the location where the order is taken, or (2) where the location of the shipping department and fulfillment department are in a different physical location from the location where the order is taken. Thus, the present invention contemplates a situation wherein the location where the order is taken may be remote from the location where the goods are shipped, even by thousands of miles. All information required to fulfill and ship is on a single integrated form reducing the chance for error. Thus, for example, an order could be taken in Vermont and the goods ordered could be shipped from Virginia. Under such circumstances, the information to be printed on the integrated pick ticket could be generated at the location where the order is taken and then transmitted to the location, where the order is to be fulfilled and shipped, via a global computer network such as that which is well known by the expression the "INTERNET". Under such circumstances, the fulfillment and shipping location is provided with appropriate commercially available software enabling it to receive a message including bar coded information permitting the fulfillment and shipping location to print out the information onto the integrated pick ticket at that location. Either embodiment of integrated pick ticket can be employed under this scenario.

As such, it is a first object of the present invention to provide an improved integrated pick ticket and method of fulfillment and shipping.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide such an invention wherein an integrated pick ticket is provided with all information necessary to allow the fulfillment and shipping departments to fulfill a gift order, provide a gift card, and prepare the order for shipping.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide such an invention wherein a machine readable label is bar-coded with machine readable order number information to permit retrieval of order information and carrier information and therefrom to permit automated creation of a shipping label including information used by a common carrier to manifest and route a package for delivery through its system.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide such a system and method wherein the shipping label is affixed on the shipping container and, if desired, over the bar code label so that the bar coding on the label does not confuse bar code readers in the offices of the common carrier.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide embodiments of an integrated pick ticket that may be employed whether the order fulfillment department and shipping

department are in the same location as the order taking department or, alternatively, where they are in separate locations.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide such an invention wherein the order taking department can transmit the integrated pick ticket information to the fulfillment department at a remote location via a global computerized communications network such as the "INTERNET" where it is printed on the integrated pick ticket to improve efficiency and minimize errors of fulfillment and shipping at a remote location.

These and other objects, aspects and features of the present invention will be better understood from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments when read in conjunction with the appended drawing figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows a front view of a first embodiment of an integrated pick ticket in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

Figure 2 shows a rear view of the integrated pick ticket of Figure 1.

Figure 3 shows a flowchart demonstrating the inventive method of the present invention concerning operation of the shipping department.

Figure 4 shows a front view of a second embodiment of an integrated pick ticket in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

Figure 5 shows a flowchart demonstrating operation of the inventive method of practicing the present invention concerning the order taking department.

SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

With reference, first, to Figures 1 and 2, the front and back of a first embodiment of an integrated pick ticket will now be described. The inventive ticket is generally designated by the reference numeral 10 and is seen to include a front face 11 and a rear face 13. The front face includes a perforation 15 separating an upper region 17 from a lower region 19. The upper region 17 also includes a vertical perforation 21 that allows the upper region 17 to be folded thereabout. Of course, the perforation 21 could be horizontal. With reference to Figure 2, the upper region 17 has a reverse side 23 that includes an aesthetic design comprising the outer faces of a gift card. Looking back at Figure 1, the right-hand side 25 of the front face of the upper region 17 includes a slogan 27 or personalized greeting, in the example shown, "BEING SICK CAN BE A BEAR. HOPE YOU'RE BETTER SOON! FROM JIMMY". Of course, this greeting may be personalized for any occasion and for any gift giver.

With further reference to Figure 1, the lower region 19 of the face 11 of the ticket 10 includes various printings thereon. These printings include name and address information 29 concerning the sender, name and address information 31 concerning the recipient, shipping information 33, date of order 35, date of preparation 37, date of shipping 39, and order number 41.

Additionally, information printed thereon includes the date of printing 43, the time of printing 45, and a whole section of information 47 comprising a pick list which includes product identification codes and descriptions for the gift products ordered by the sender 29. The pick list information also includes location information 49 which allows employees of the fulfillment department to retrieve the items listed from inventory and appropriately assemble them together for shipment.

The lower region 19 also includes, printed thereon, a bar code label 51 having a peripheral perforation 53 allowing the bar code label 51 to be easily removed from the ticket 10. The bar code label 51 has a rear surface 55 shown in phantom in Figure 2 which is covered with adhesive (not shown). A release paper 57 overlies a corner of the rear face 13 of the ticket 10 and covers the rear surface 55 of the bar code label 51 to protect the adhesive from contamination.

The bar code label 51 includes a bar code 59 thereon which comprises an order number in machine readable language. Of course, any type of machine or human readable language could be substituted for the bar code.

With the ticket 10 being described in detail, reference is now made to Figure 3 to describe the method of using the ticket 10 in fulfilling and shipping gifts from a sender 29 to a recipient 31.

First, the fulfillment department receives the ticket 10 and personnel assemble the gift printed on the ticket 10 and place the gift in a gift container (not shown). The upper region 17 comprising a card is removed from the ticket and placed into the gift container.

Thereafter, fulfillment department personnel remove the bar code label 51 from the ticket 10 and adhere it to the gift container at a location where, later, a shipping label will be affixed. Thereafter, the gift container with the bar code label 51 affixed thereto is conveyed to a bar code reader in the shipping department where the label 51 is read and, from order number information read from the bar code label, a shipping manifest system looks up the shipping and delivery information and generates a shipping label which includes all information including common carrier specific information necessary for the carrier to manifest, route and deliver the package. Shipping department personnel may adhere the shipping label (not shown) over the bar code label 51 so

that the bar code label 51 is completely hidden under the shipping label so that bar code readers operated by the common carrier will not read the bar code 59 and be confused thereby. Of course, it is not necessary to adhere the shipping label over the bar code label since the common carrier machine reader can usually discern the difference between the label 51 and their shipping label.

With reference to Figure 4, an alternative form of the integrated pick ticket is generally designated by the reference numeral 70 with like elements being referred to using like primed reference numerals. The sole difference between the integrated pick ticket 10 depicted in Figure 1 and the integrated pick ticket 70 depicted in Figure 4 consists of replacement of the bar code label 51 with a shipping label 71. As shown in Figure 4, the shipping label 71 includes the name and address 73 of the recipient. All of the other information on the shipping label 71 is information that is specific to a common carrier necessary to manifest, route and deliver the package including a tracking number 74, a delivery deadline 75, the letter code 76 for the airport adjacent the recipient (for example, JFK for John F. Kennedy Airport, IAD for Dulles International Airport, DCA for Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, etc.), the recipient's zip code 77, the recipient's state of residence 78, and including a bar code 79 with certain information necessary for the common carrier to scan and write to their database.

With reference to Figures 3 and 5, the use of the integrated pick ticket 70 should be self-evident. With reference to Figure 5, whether the fulfillment and shipping departments are in the same location as the order taking department or in a geographically remote location, the integrated pick ticket information is generated within a computer and is either printed at the location where the fulfillment department is located, where that location is the same as that of the order taking department, or is electronically transmitted to the remote geographic location of the fulfillment department where it is printed out. In either case, with reference to Figure 3, once the integrated pick ticket 70 is printed out, the order is fulfilled including placement of the gift card in the package, and the shipping label 71 is removed therefrom and affixed to the package in a desired location thereon. As should be understood from Figure 2, a paper analogous to the paper 57 is provided on the back side of the integrated pick ticket 70 so that the label 71 may be adhesive backed and the paper corresponding to the paper 57 comprises a release paper (not shown).

In a further aspect of the inventive method, reference is again made to Figure 3 wherein one of the boxes in the flowchart states the following: "BAR CODE LABEL IS READ AND SHIPPING LABEL WITH COMMON CARRIER SPECIFIC INFORMATION IS GENERATED". In practicing this aspect of the inventive method, the customer is

queried concerning the desired level of service requested including the date on which it is desired that the package be received by the recipient. However, the particular common carrier to be employed is not specified to the customer. When the bar code label is read by the machine reader, the machine reader transmits to a computer the desired level of service requested by the customer including the desired date of receipt by the recipient. The computer is pre-programmed with information concerning all of the tariffs and other billing and shipping information for each common carrier employed by the shipper including, for example, Federal Express, DHL, United Parcel Service, the United States Postal Service, etc. For each individual package, depending upon the weight of the package, the desired date of delivery, the size of the package, the recipient's zip code and any other relevant criteria, the shipper determines, via the computer, the least expensive common carrier for that particular situation and prints out a common carrier label in accordance with that information.

Through the teachings of the present invention, a gift may be assembled, packaged and shipped in an efficient manner, without confusion, and in a manner such that profitability is enhanced. Most importantly, incorporation of the gift card as a removable portion of the integrated pick ticket prevents the gift recipient from receiving the wrong card.

Of course, any machine readable label may be employed.

As such, an invention has been disclosed in terms of preferred embodiments thereof which fulfill each and every one of the objects of the invention as set forth hereinabove and provide a new and useful improved integrated pick ticket and method of shipping of great novelty and utility.

Of course, various changes, modifications and alterations in the teachings of the present invention may be contemplated by those skilled in the art without departing from the intended spirit and scope thereof.

As such, it is intended that the present invention only be limited by the terms of the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. An integrated pick ticket, comprising:
 - a) a front surface and a rear surface;
 - b) said front surface including first and second regions separated by a perforation;
 - c) said first region comprising a gift card;
 - d) said second region including:
 - i) a first area having printed thereon information concerning a gift recipient and a gift to be sent thereto; and
 - ii) a second area including identification information thereon permitting identification of name and address of said gift recipient and shipping information.
2. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said first region comprises an upper region.
3. The ticket of Claim 2, wherein said second region comprises a lower region.
4. The ticket of Claim 2, wherein said first region includes a further perforation, whereby said gift card is foldable about said further perforation.
5. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said first area further includes information printed thereon concerning gift sender.

6. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said shipping information includes a name of a common carrier and type of shipping service requested.

7. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said second area includes a machine readable label.

8. The ticket of Claim 7, wherein said label has a peripheral perforation.

9. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said second area includes a machine readable label having an adhesive covered surface forming a part of said rear surface of said ticket.

10. The ticket of Claim 9, wherein a release paper covers said adhesive covered surface of said label.

11. The ticket of Claim 1, wherein said identification information and shipping information are provided on a separable shipping label.

12. The ticket of Claim 11, wherein at least some of said shipping information is provided on a machine readable code printed on said shipping label.

13. An integrated pick ticket, comprising:
- a) a front surface and a rear surface;
 - b) said front surface including upper and lower regions separated by a perforation;
 - c) said first region comprising a foldable gift card;
 - d) said second region including:
 - i) a first area having printed thereon information concerning a gift sender, gift recipient and a gift to be sent thereto; and
 - ii) a second area including a machine readable label having identification information thereon permitting identification of a name and address of said gift recipient and shipping information including an identified common carrier and mode of shipping.

14. The ticket of Claim 13, wherein said label has a peripheral perforation.

15. The ticket of Claim 14, wherein said label has an adhesive covered surface forming a part of said rear surface of said ticket, and a release paper covering said adhesive covered surface of said label.

16. A method of fulfilling and shipping a gift to a gift recipient, including the steps of:

- a) providing an integrated pick ticket including:
 - i) a front surface and a rear surface;
 - ii) said front surface including first and second regions separated by a perforation;
 - iii) said first region comprising a gift card;
 - iv) said second region including:
 - A) a first area having printed thereon information concerning a gift recipient and a gift to be sent thereto; and
 - B) a second area including a machine readable label permitting identification of name and address of said gift recipient and shipping information;
- b) reading said integrated pick ticket and assembling a gift from information printed thereon;
- c) placing said gift in a container;
- d) affixing said machine readable label on said container;
- e) reading said label using a machine label reader and, from reading said label, generating a shipping label;
- f) determining mode of shipping and common carrier;
- g) affixing said shipping label on said container;
- h) causing said container to be shipped by said common carrier.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein said machine readable label comprises a bar code label.

18. A method of fulfilling and shipping a gift to a gift recipient, including the steps of:

a) obtaining information from a customer concerning a gift recipient, gift to be sent, and desired date of delivery;

b) programming said information in a computer;

c) from said information, said computer instructing a printer to print an integrated pick ticket including:

i) a front surface and a rear surface;

ii) said front surface including first and second regions separated by a perforation;

iii) said first region comprising a personalized gift card;

iv) said second region including:

A) a first area having printed thereon information concerning a gift recipient and a gift to be sent thereto; and

B) a second area including a shipping label having printing thereon for recipient name and address, and for a common carrier including a tracking number, delivery date and machine readable code;

d) reading said integrated pick ticket and assembling a gift from information printed thereon;

e) placing said gift and said gift card in a container;

f) affixing said shipping label on said container;

g) causing said container to be shipped by said common carrier.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein said printer is adjacent said computer.

20. The method of Claim 18, wherein said computer comprises a first computer, said printer being connected to a second computer remote from said first computer, said computers communicating via a global computer communications network.

21. The method of Claim 20, further including the step of causing said first computer to instruct said second computer to direct said printer to print said integrated pick ticket.

01270996

Order Information	Sender	Receiver
Order: 01270996 Date: 02-27-00 Prep: 02-28-00 Ship: 02-28-00	JAMES B STUTTS, JR. 29 STRAW LANE HICKSVILLE, NY 11801	DEBBIE BRUTCH 16 UNDERHILL AVE SYOSSET, NY 11791
Shipping: GD2 + STD 2-DAY DELIVERY 13.00 Referral: NYK-AXQ DHL IATA: FRG		Printed: 02-28-00 14:24 Eastern IATA: JFK

Location	T	Product	Qty	Description
46.UNK	L	WASA15010	1	Sark, Get Well Soon
SBEAR	I	ABJP15002	1	Bear, 15" Honey
SB11A	I	WCJC15006	1	15" Labcoat, White***NO ARTWORK***EMBROIDERY/Jacket Front: 1 Line, 11 Characters. Jacket Back: 3 Lines, 8 Characters each.
46.UNK	I	WAPR00001	1	Prof Acc, Stethoscope, Blk & Silver
46.UNK	I	CANDY	1	Include Chocolate Bear Head (CHK QTY)

FIG 1

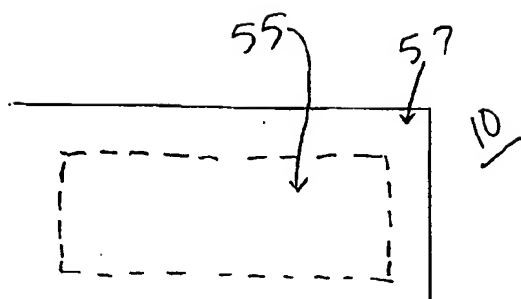




23

13

FIG 2



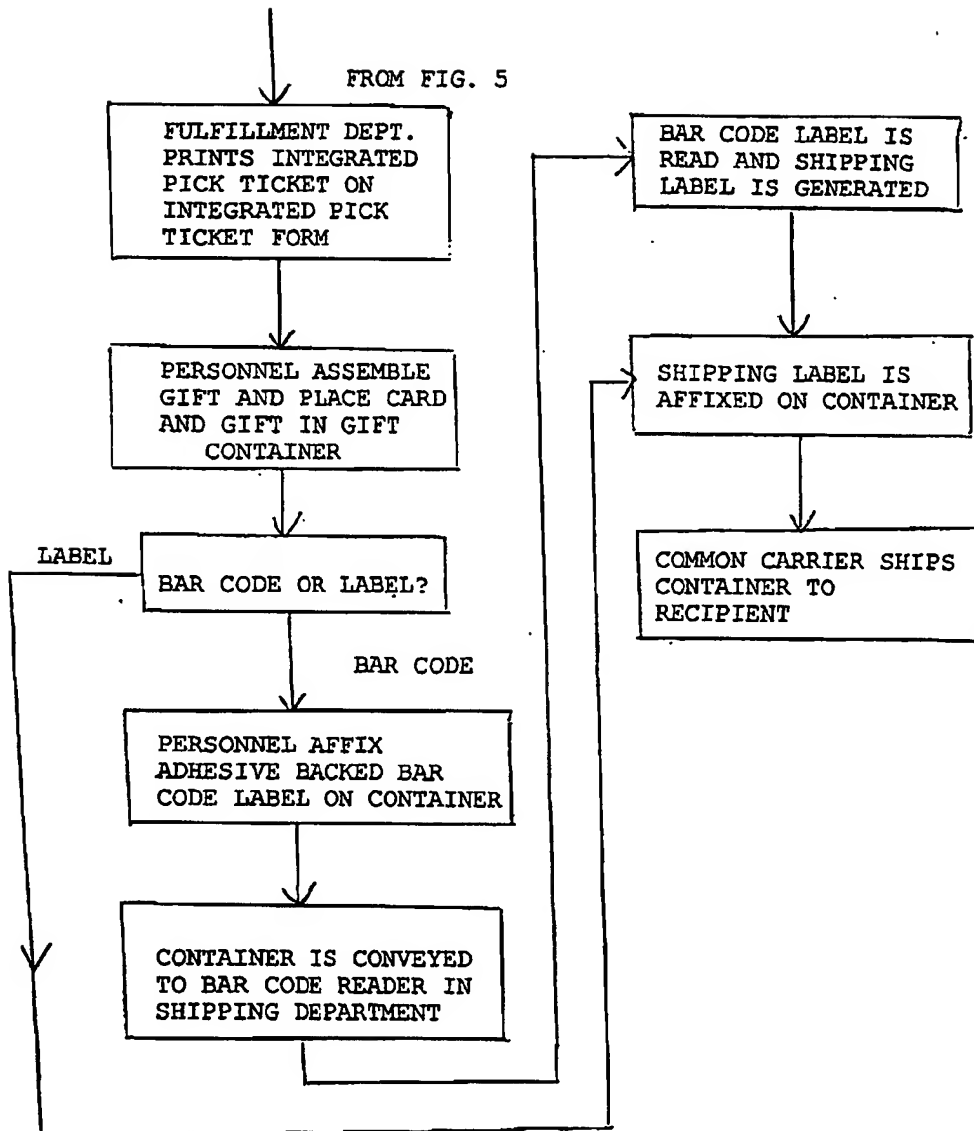


FIG. 3

70

17'

21'

Being sick can be a bear.
Hope you're better soon!
From Jimmy

25'

27

15'

01270996

Order Information	Sender	Receiver
Order: 01270996 Date: 02-27-00 Prep: 02-28-00 Ship: 02-28-00	JAMES D STUTTS, JR. 29 STRAW LANE HICKSVILLE, NY 11801	DEBBIE BRUTCH 16 UNDERHILL AVE SYOSSET, NY 11791
Shipping: GD2 + STD 2-DAY DELIVERY 13.00 Referat: NYK-AXQ DHL IATA: FRG		Printed: 02-28-00 14:24 Eastern IATA: JFK

Location	T	Product	Qty	Description
46.UNK	L	WASA15010	1	Sash, Get Well Soon
8BEAR	I	ADJP15002	1	Bear, 15" Honey
SB11A	I	WCJC15006	1	15" Labcoat, White***NO ARTWORK***EMBROIDERY:Jacket Front: 1 Line, 11 Characters.Jacket Back: 3 Lines, 8 Characters each.
46.UNK	I	WAPR00001	1	Prof Acc, Stethoscope, Blk & Silver
46.UNK	I	CANDY	1	Include Chocolate Bear Head (CHK QTY)

49

47

FIG 4

11'

73 → Debbie Brutch
16 Underhill Avenue
Syosset, NY 11791


74 → 7518 1347 6361
11791 -NY-US

75 → Deliver By
01MAR00
JFR

76 → 19 ZFOA

77 →

79 →



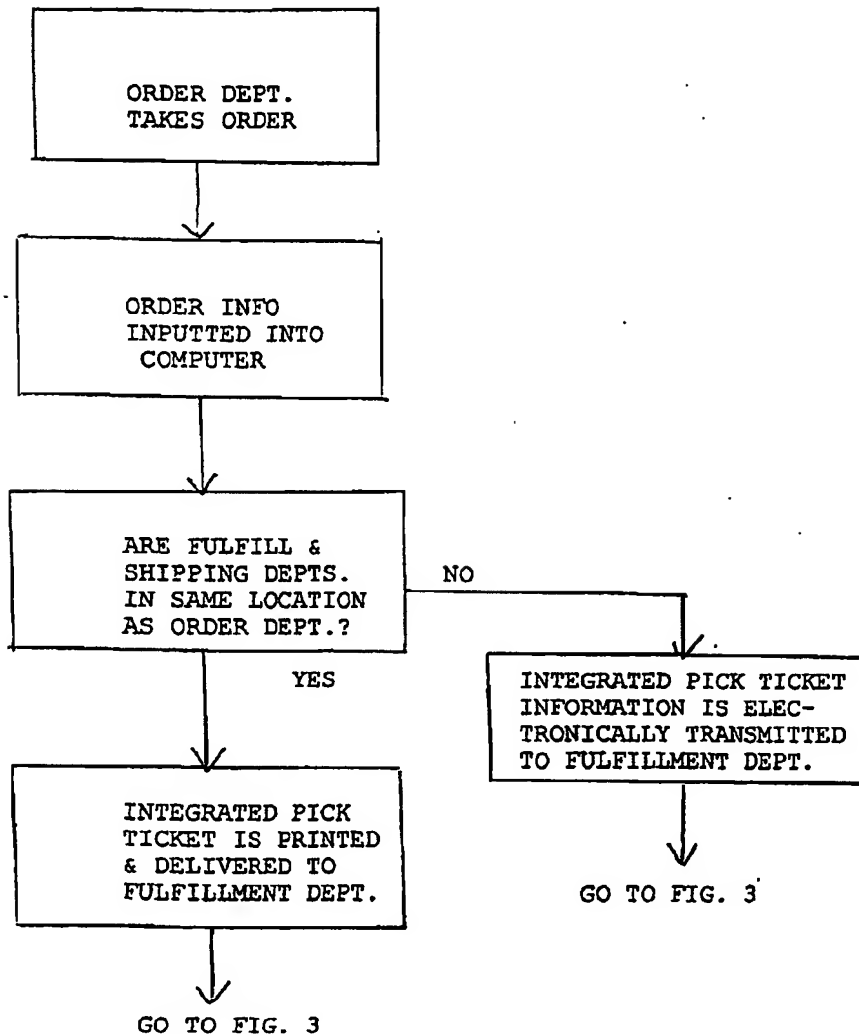


FIG. 5